



Peshawar is the primary border city situated close to the Afghan border and is strategically important to Pakistan. Deriving its name from a Sanskrit word Pushpapura meaning the city of flowers Peshawar's flowers are legendary eliciting tribute from illustrious personages such as Emperor Babar. Its prominence even in antiquity could be judged from the discovery of remains at nearby Charsadda depicting that Alexander's legions were held up here in 327 BC for 40 days. The Khyber Pass and Peshawar Valley have resounded by the echo of marching feet as successive armies hurtled down the crossroads of history, a pathway of commerce, migration and invasion by the Aryans, Scythians, Persians, Greeks, Bactrians, Kushans, Huns, Turks, Mongols and Mughals.

Peshawar's existence as a frontier city is exemplified in the bonhomie prevalent amongst its residents. A traditionally male dominated society Peshawar is proud of its legacy of armed resistance to a host of invaders who came through the great passes of mountainous region such as Khyber, Tochi and Gomal. Peshawar is also rich in literature and its famous bards include Khushal Khan Khattak and Rehman Baba. As repository of 25 centuries of hard struggle Peshawar is the typical battle hardened land that smells of luscious, roasted meat and tobacco.

The old Peshawar has by and large retained its traditional luster that is symptomatic with rhythmic

sounds of craftsmen's hammer and horses' hooves, unhurried lifestyle and overhanging balconies. It has retained its intimate demeanor and age old air of intimacy. With its freely mingling crowd of townsmen, traders and tourists Peshawar exudes an air of brittle calm.

Peshawar was once ringed by no less than 16 gates most famous of them being Kabuli Gate and numerous bazaars. Qissa Khawani Bazaar owing its name to the inveterate tales narrated by travelers visiting from all over

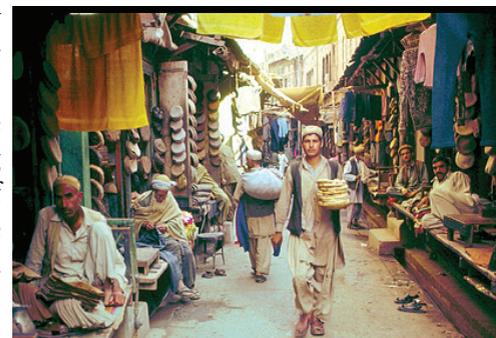


the Central Asian region was and is the most recognizable sign of Peshawar. As in most eastern bazaars, the outlets of delicacies are in abundance displaying merchandize in colorful shops mostly glorious harvest of Peshawar's orchards. The enticing aroma of Peshawar's unrivaled bread and justly celebrated Kebab and Tikka (meat sizzling on hot coals) engulfs many wayside cafes. Leather goods shops are the next numerous selling that wonderful footwear, the Chappal or sandals, belts, holsters and bandoliers and a special variety of light but sturdy suitcases called Yakhdan.

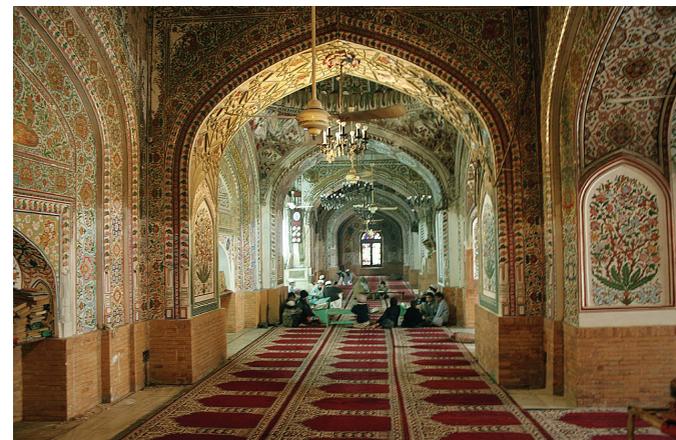


Located in the old city near Chowk Yadgar is

the legendary Meena Bazaar that caters to ladies were displaying all kinds of articles like embroidered clothes, ribbons and



lace, buttons and bows, in fact everything women need. Pipal Mandi is located near Qissa Khawani Bazaar and is famous for its alleys full of wholesale grain, cloth and other goods for trade. A famous Pipal tree, under which Lord Buddha preached, still stands. Mochi Lara (Shoe Market) is famous for its embroidered sandals and shoes. In Chitrali Bazaar, traditional apparel like caps, shawls and waistcoats from Chitral are sold. Guloon Wala (flower seller) offers traditional flower and currency notes garlands used in wedding ceremonies. Batair Bazaar (Birds Market) is famous for selling all kinds of birds such as parrots, sparrows and pigeons. Andarshahr (Goldsmith Market) houses gold and silversmiths selling modern, ethnic and antique jewellery. The tiny alleys



of the bazaar contain many shops of rare antique items, cut and uncut gems and many other interesting articles.

Peshawar is also widely known for its attractive mosques most prominent among them is Mahabat Khan

Mosque built by Mahabat Khan in 1676 when he was twice appointed as Governor of Peshawar under Mughal Emperors Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb. The mosque was nearly destroyed by fire in 1898 and was only saved by the unremitting efforts of the faithful. The extensive renovation of the mosque was done by traditional craftsmen. The mosque is a fine specimen of Mughal architecture. The interior of the prayer hall has been lavishly decorated with floral work and calligraphy. Qasim Ali Khan Mosque is situated in Bazaar Misgaran in Qissa Khawani and was built during Mughal era by Qasim Ali Khan, brother of Mahabat Khan. It was rebuilt by Haji Ghulam Samdani a hundred years ago after it was damaged by flood.

Amongst historical monuments is Chowk Yadgar located in the heart of the old city in an open square. In it stands a memorial to Col. E. C. Hastings who died in 1884. It was replaced by a new memorial to commemorate the heroes of the 1965 Indo-Pak war. It is the speaker's corner of Peshawar where political meetings are held. The west side is lined with shops and stalls of money changers with



their display of currencies. Roads from Chowk Yadgar lead to the Goldsmith Bazaar, Kutchery Gate, Kotwali Darwaza and the Clock Tower. The Clock Tower (Ghanta Ghar) was constructed by Sir George Cunningham in 1900 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Sethi Houses are situated in the Mohalla Sethian and can be approached from Chowk Yadgar. These are highly decorated buildings with carved wooden doors,

partitions, balconies, mirrored and painted rooms.

During their rule the Sikhs constructed many buildings that include Gurdwara Bhai Jugan Shah situated behind Sar Asiya Gate and is a fine example of the Sikh architecture. Bala Hisar Fort lies on both eastern and western approaches to Peshawar city. It meets the eye when coming from Rawalpindi or from Khyber Pass.



It is a redoubtable structure and, as its name implies, creates an awful impact on onlookers. Originally built by Emperor Babur in 1526 it was rebuilt to its present form by the Sikh Governor of Peshawar, Hari Singh Nalwa in the 1830s under the supervision of French engineers.

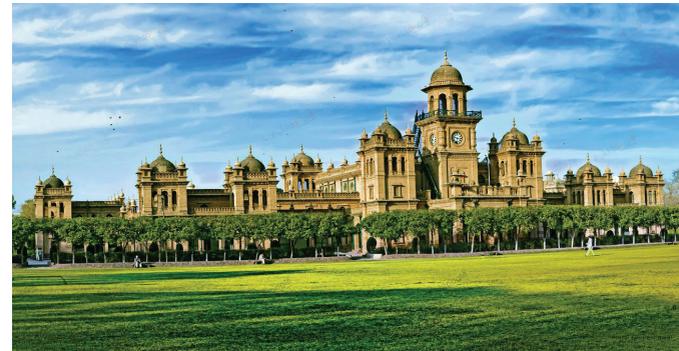
The hallmark of the cantonment is Saddar Bazaar that sells all kinds of wares including clothes, shoes, souvenirs, carpets, flowers, fast food and books. Cinema houses and airlines offices are located here too. Many new markets have sprung up all over Peshawar offering Afghan antique silver jewellery, carpets and rugs, gemstones, embroidery, decoration items, old and new Afghan furniture, items of silver inlaid with bone and semi-precious stones. Handicrafts from many provinces of Afghanistan made by Afghan craftsmen (and women) are also available.

True to its origins Peshawar is a garden city, a home to tall trees and pervading scent of rare shrubs and flowers that is Peshawar's own. In the heart of Saddar is Khalid-Bin-Walid Bagh (Company Bagh), which is an old Mughal Garden. Its huge ancient trees and gorgeous

roses are second to none. Two other splendid old gardens are Shahi Bagh in the north-east and Wazir Bagh giving credence to the character of a garden city to Peshawar. The prestigious Saddar contains splendid modern day buildings such as State Bank building, Governor's House, old missionary Edwardes High School and Edwardes College, Peshawar Club, Peshawar Museum, Church Mission Hospital and an excellent shopping precinct.

As an appendage to the rich heritage of the city is Peshawar Museum housed in the Victoria Memorial Hall, an imposing building of the British Raj, built in 1905. The large hall with side galleries and the raised platform, which was once used as a ballroom, now displays in chronological order, finest specimens of Gandhara sculptures, tribal life, the Muslim period and ethnography.

The centuries old Peshawar is mostly the old city and the Peshawar of British Raj is the Cantonment but the Peshawar of independent Pakistan is the vast extension of the city towards west and east. Westward, on the road to the Khyber, stretches a long line of educational and research institutions, such as the Academy of Rural Development, Teacher's Training College, Khyber Medical University and many other new and important buildings. Moreover Peshawar has expanded its bazaars through the University Road peppered with Pakistani, Afghan and Chinese eateries, carpet and clothing shops,



furniture and video shops, internet services, departmental stores, bakeries, sweetshops and automobile showrooms.

The most celebrated educational institution located in the city is Peshawar University. Established in 1949 the



University has various Colleges, Faculties and Institutes, both for males and females including medical, engineering, law, forest, computer sciences and agriculture. Another illustrious place of learning is Islamia College founded in 1913. The College building stands by the side of Jamrud Road about 10 km to the west and has a magnificent front towards the road with its domes, kiosks and pinnacles rising above the greenery which contrasts with the brick-red color of the building. The gardens are symmetrical as in old Mughal style. Long avenues are lined with lime and sisu trees. The College hostels are of the same symmetry.



Data courtesy PTDC

PESHAWAR

